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Melksham Urban District Council



THE
ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

and the

Public Health Inspector

for the Year 1962

Melksham Urban District Council

—

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To the Chairman and Members of the

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1962 on the health of the Melksham Urban District.

The district has remained free from serious epidemics throughout the year. In the early part of the year, cases of smallpox occurred in England and Wales which resulted in a public demand for smallpox vaccination. This trend is reflected in the figures given in this report.

The publication by the Royal College of Physicians of the report "Smoking and Health" followed by the Ministry of Health's encouragement of Health Education on this subject has been implemented by the distribution of posters and by individual talks on smoking in relation to lung cancer and other diseases.

I am indebted to the County Medical Officer of Health for providing the immunisation statistics contained within. It will be seen that oral poliomyelitis vaccine has now been introduced for more general use. It has also been shown to be of considerable value in combating outbreaks of poliomyelitis.

I wish to thank the Members of the Council and particularly the Health Committee for the encouragement that they have given me during the year and my colleagues for their interest and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. J. SPELLER,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

Medical Officer of Health :

P. J. SPELLER, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,

who is also Medical Officer of Health to Bradford and Melksham Rural District and Assistant County Medical Officer.

Office : 1 King Street, Melksham. Tel: Melksham 2307.

Public Health Inspector :

W. F. ACRES, M.A.P.H.I., A.R.S.H.

Office : 1 King Street, Melksham. Tel: Melksham 2307.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of the District (Acres)	1,042
Estimated Population	8,560
Number of Inhabited Houses	2,677
Rateable Value	£136,104
Sum represented by a penny rate	£545

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

The following statistics have been compiled from information received from the Registrar General :—

Births

Live Births

<i>Births</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	70	79	149
Illegitimate	5	3	8
Total number of live births ...	75	82	157

Birth Rate for the District (i.e. per 1,000 population) ...	17
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...	18.0

Still Births

<i>Births</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	2	—	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of still births ...	2	—	2

Still Birth Rate for the District per 1,000 total Live and Still Births ...	12.6
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...	18.1

Deaths

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of Deaths in the Area ...	44	36	80
Local Death Rate (i.e., per 1,000 population) ...			11.5
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...			11.9

Infant Mortality

Deaths of Infants under 1 year

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	2	2	4
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of deaths ...	2	2	4

Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age (included above)

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of deaths ...	1	1	2

Deaths of Infants under 1 week of age (included above)

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of deaths ...	1	1	2

Infant Mortality Rates

Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births—Total ...	25.5
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...	21.4
Neo-Natal Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births (1st four weeks)	12.7

Causes of Deaths

The causes of deaths classified according to the Registrar General's system, are given in the following table :—

		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Tuberculosis (respiratory)	...	...	—	—
(other)	...	...	—	—
Syphilitic disease	...	...	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	—	—
Meningococcal infections	...	...	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	—	—
Measles	...	...	—	—
Other Infective and Parasitic disease		—	—	—
Malignant Neoplasm (stomach)		1	—	1
(lung bronchus)		1	1	2
(breast)	...	—	2	2
(uterus)	...	—	—	—
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	9	1	—	10
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	...	1	—	1
Diabetes	...	—	2	2
Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	6	4	10
Coronary disease, Angina	...	9	8	17
Hypertension with heart disease	...	1	—	1
Other heart disease	...	6	6	12
Other circulatory disease	...	—	2	2
Influenza	...	—	—	—
Pneumonia	...	4	3	7
Bronchitis	...	2	—	2
Other diseases of the respiratory system		—	1	1
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	1	—	1
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	...	—	—	—
Nephritis and Nephrosis	...	—	—	—
Hyperplasia of prostate	...	—	—	—
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	—	—	—
Congenital malformations	...	—	—	—
Other defined and ill defined diseases	2	3	—	5
Motor vehicle accidents	...	—	—	—
All other accidents	...	1	3	4
Suicide	...	—	—	—
Homicide and Operations of War	...	—	—	—
Totals		44	36	80

Age and Sex Incidence of Death from Heart and Arterial Disease

THESE TABLES HAVE BEEN COMPILED FROM LOCAL INFORMATION

Under 30		Under 40		Under 50		Under 60		Under 70		Under 80		Under 90		Over 90	
M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
—	—	—	—	3	—	2	2	5	2	8	7	4	5	—	—

Age and Sex Incidence of Death from Cancer

9

Location of Cancer	Under 30		Under 40		Under 50		Under 60		Under 70		Under 80		Over 90	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Cancer of Bowel	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Cancer of Breast	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Lung	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Stomach	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Alimentary (other than above)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Genital	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Reproductive	...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Miscellaneous	...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—

OUTLINE OF THE HEALTH SERVICES OPERATING IN THE AREA

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory, Manor Hospital Bath, undertakes all necessary bacteriological and pathological examinations in the district.

The laboratory with its skilled staff, provides a most valuable service with regard to the examination of drinking water, food and milk samples, throat swabs, etc., and their willing co-operation and expert advice is much appreciated.

Hospital Facilities

The South-Western Regional Hospital Board is responsible for hospital facilities in this district.

The two hospitals in the area are a general hospital at Melksham, and a hospital for the chronic sick at Semington. Other general hospitals are situated in the neighbouring towns, with larger ones in Bath and Bristol.

Melksham Hospital with its very pleasant surroundings admits a wide variety of medical and surgical cases and is a most efficient and well-run unit of 42 beds. Melksham is indeed fortunate in having so excellent and so modern a hospital with such exceptional amenities at its disposal.

The nearest hospital for the treatment of common infectious disease is Bath Isolation Hospital. The nearest Smallpox Hospital is at Bristol.

County Health Facilities

The following health services operating in the district are provided by the County Health Committee :—

Care of expectant and nursing mothers and young children.
Domiciliary Midwifery.

Health Visiting.

Home Nursing.

Arrangements for vaccination and immunisation.

Ambulances and ambulance cars.

Domestic Helps.

Arrangements under Part III of the National Health Service Act for the prevention of illness; care and after-care; and health education.

Mental Health Service.

PREVALENCE & CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Comparison with Previous Years

Disease	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
Scarlet Fever	2	2	4	1	2	2
Whooping Cough ...	57	1	19	1	10	—
Poliomyelitis—Paralytic	—	1	—	—	—	—
Non-paralytic	—	—	—	—	1	—
Measles	19	5	287	2	231	3
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	1	1	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	1	—	3	14	—	—
Salmonellosis	—	—	—	1	—	2
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal pyrexia ...	—	1	—	—	—	—
Meningococcal infection	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tuberculosis	3	2	1	3	1	4

Analysis under Age Groups

The distribution of cases according to age and sex are shown in the following tables.

Age Groups	Scarlet Fever		Whooping Cough		Acute Poliomyelitis		Measles		Dysentery	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-2 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3-4 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
5-9 years	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
10-14 years	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15-24 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—

Age Groups	Pneumonia		Salmonellosis		Erysipelas		Puerperal Pyrexia		Tuberculosis		Meningococcal Inf.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 5 yrs.	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5-14 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
15-44 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
45-64 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
65 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—

Poliomyelitis

No cases of poliomyelitis were reported.

Tuberculosis

	New Cases			No of cases.	
1957	3
1958	2
1959	1
1960	3
1961	1
1962	4

Distribution of new cases according to age, sex, and localisation of disease, is as follows :—

Age Groups	New Cases				Deaths	
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		M.	F.
	M.	F.	M.	F.		
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-5 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
6-15 years	—	1	—	—	—	—
16-25 years	1	—	1	—	—	—
26-35 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
36-45 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
46-55 years	—	—	1	—	—	—
56-65 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over 65	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1	1	2	—	—	—

From the above table it will be seen that 2 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were notified during 1962. No deaths from tuberculosis were recorded.

Housing of Tuberculosis Patients

Cases are referred from time to time by the Chest Physician for consideration for re-housing. These cases are classified as follows :—

Certificate No.1. Sputum-positive cases where re-housing is considered urgent for the prevention of infection.

Certificate No. 2. Where better housing would be desirable in order to improve and maintain the patient's health.

Certificate No. 3. Where improved housing would be beneficial but is not an urgent matter.

One Certificate No. 1 was received during the year. The family concerned was re-housed the following month.

Diphtheria Immunisation

Diphtheria immunisation is carried out systematically throughout the district by General Practitioners and County Medical Officers, in homes, schools and clinics.

Immunisation Statistics, 1962

<i>Year of Birth</i>		1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1953-57	1948-52
Primary imms. completed during 1962	Diph.	54	77	8	1	2	9	—
	Wh /c.	54	77	8	1	2	—	—
	Tet.	54	77	8	2	5	69	13
Reinf. injections administered during 1962	Diph.	—	17	20	8	8	80	6
	Wh /c.	—	17	19	6	1	12	1
	Tet.	—	17	20	11	8	90	26

As shown in the above table 151 primary and 139 reinforcing immunisations against diphtheria were undertaken. 142 primary and 56 reinforcing immunisations against whooping cough were performed. 228 primary and 172 reinforcing immunisations against tetanus were given.

Poliomyelitis Immunisations

Completed during 1962

<i>Persons born</i>	2nd inj.	3rd inj.	4th inj.	3 oral	3rd oral after 2 injs.	4th oral
1943—1961	27	214	9	146	30	223
1933—1942	9	47	—	29	12	—
Babies born in 1962	—	—	—	9	—	—
Others	24	155	—	62	33	—
Totals	60	416	9	246	75	223

Smallpox Vaccination

Number of persons vaccinated (or re-vaccinated) during 1962 :—

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Under 1</i>	1	2-4	5-14	15 or over
Vaccinations	148	46	61	350	449
Re-vaccinations	—	1	30	284	666

1,054 primary vaccinations were undertaken compared with 104 in the previous year. Re-vaccinations numbered 981.

Vaccination is performed under the National Health Service by General Practitioners. Emergency clinics can be operated in the event of an outbreak of smallpox in County Health Clinics at Salisbury and Swindon. Vaccination propaganda is undertaken by the County Health Authority.

Food Poisoning

Two cases of food poisoning were reported.

National Assistance Act, 1948

SECTION 47: REMOVAL TO SUITABLE PREMISES OF PERSONS IN NEED OF CARE AND ATTENTION

It was not found necessary to obtain compulsory removal of any persons against their will from their homes.

This step is one that should only be considered after all the assistance that can be given by Home Helps, District Nurses, National Assistance Officers and Welfare Officers, etc., has failed to provide the care and attention needed.

R E P O R T
o f t h e
P U B L I C H E A L T H I N S P E C T O R

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my sixth Annual Report for this area.

Not nearly as much progress as I could have wished was made, but other factors combined against the desired progress on the second phase of Slum Clearance. Every effort will be made in 1963 to deal with this phase and also the difficult problems of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Since working in Melksham, I have been surprised how few tenants make use of the services of the Public Health Department to register complaints of house defects. This is certainly not because the standard of tenanted property is especially high and I often wonder why this should be.

To the Public Health Committee, and to all colleagues for their ready support, I express my grateful thanks.

W. F. ACRES,

Public Health Inspector.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS, 1936 AND 1961

(ii) **Verminous Premises and Other Infestations**

No cases of infestation were reported or discovered, and the only action necessary was in a few instances of wasps nests, ants where especially troublesome, and cluster flies. The several infestations of cluster flies were unpleasant to householders but all were readily cleared using proprietary smokes.

An interesting job was dealing with a nuisance caused by pigeons roosting on the facade of the Town Hall. Use of the proprietary "strip" proved an effective deterrent.

(iii) **Drainage and Sewerage**

With the completion of the Semington Road sewerage scheme nearly every house in the urban area is now served by public sewers. There are very few houses not connected.

Several complaints of blocked drains and sewers were expeditiously dealt with by the Surveyor's Department.

(iv) **Water Supplies**

The town receives its supplies mainly from the West Wilts Water Board, but part of the northern area is supplied from the North West Wilts Board. Quality is excellent, and generally quantity is satisfactory. Some localities suffer from loss of pressure however on certain days, but this is not unduly serious.

The waters are not plumbo-solvent, and copies of bacteriological analysis taken by Boards are sent to the Department regularly. All have been very satisfactory.

With only the odd exception, all houses in the area have piped supplies inside. I can only think of 2 or 3 standpipes existing.

(v) **Infectious Disease Enquiries**

As reported in the Medical Officer's section, infectious disease cases were very few, and caused no problems in routine enquiries, sampling or exclusion of food handlers.

CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956

A few complaints were received of smoke nuisances from industrial chimneys, and these were effectively dealt with informally.

RODENT CONTROL

The new arrangement with a part-time operator is working extremely well. No delay occurs in treatments being effected.

During the year, 90 treatments were made, this being an increase over the previous year. This does not necessarily indicate that the rodent population is on the increase. Twenty-one were for business or industrial premises and are therefore at the occupiers' expense. Domestic premises are treated free of charge.

CARAVAN SITES AND CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT ACT, 1960

Excellent progress was made in the improvement of the one residential site of 45 caravans. The development is to a very high standard, each van having its own W.C. in the required Storage Shed compartmented off, its own water supply and facilities for sink drainage. The communal sanitation block which includes baths, laundry and sanitation was not finished, but I have no doubt this site will be as good as any in the West when fully completed.

HOUSING AND HOUSING ACTS

(i) Action during the year under the Housing Acts :—

Number of inspections and re-inspections	...	81
Number of Houses suitable for action under Section 9 (repairs)	...	—
Number of Closing Orders served under Section 17 (parts of houses)	...	1
Number of Demolition Orders served under Section 17	...	—
Number of Houses demolished (from previous years)	5	

The main problem is with Houses in Multiple Occupation, and until the powers under the 1961 Act became available, action was postponed. Preliminary inspections were made ready for tackling this thorny problem in early 1963.

(ii) Problem Families

There are about half a dozen such in Council houses which I inspect from time to time not in my capacity as Housing Maintenance Officer so much as Public Health Inspector. Occasionally some improvement can be noted but this type of family necessitates perseverance over long periods, sometimes years. If the situation does not worsen, then something has been achieved.

MILK AND DAIRIES

Regular sampling of milk re-started under delegated powers from the County Council in 1962. The target sampling was not quite achieved, but results of samples for the statutory test and inspection of premises was satisfactory as can be seen :—

	Raw T.T.	Pasteurised.	T.T.(Pasteurised)	Totals.
No of samples taken	3	12	19	34
Satisfactory	...	2	12	33
Unsatisfactory	...	1	—	1

All the raw milk samples taken for biological testing were reported as negative for tuberculosis and brucellosis.

FOOD AND DRUGS

No slaughterhouse is licensed in the area and inspection of meat and other foodstuffs is normally on request of traders and the occasional complaint from members of the public. During the year 12 Condemnation Certificates were issued for a variety of foodstuffs.

Food premises inspected as and when possible were generally satisfactory. Of the complaints from the public, results were as follows :—

- (i) Meat which had a distinct violet colouration after cooking — the laboratory tests suggested the presence of chromogenus violaceum but was not isolated as a culture. Whilst the appearance was alarming, the bacterial group of chromognus does not putrefy the meat.
- (ii) Mouldy meat pie — the usual problem of length of storage and turnover of stock. Dealt with informally with the manufacturer concerned.
- (iii) Dirty watercress — shopkeeper advised to change source of supply
- (iv) Glass in Soda Pop Bottle — glass fragments were found in a bottle of cream soda. Prosecution of the manufacturers under Section 2 of the Food and Drugs Act 1955 resulted in a fine of £5 with 3 guineas costs.

SWIMMING BATHS, ETC.

(i) **Blue Pool**

This public pool was conducted in a satisfactory manner. Daily local checks are taken of free chlorine content and I inspect these records from time to time. Bacteriological samples taken by this Department all proved satisfactory.

Source of water is from the mains and constant re-circulation on a 6/8 hour basis is maintained. Treatment consists of filtration by twin Diafilters, chlorination and aeration over a cascade.

(ii) **Paddling Pool, King Georges Field**

Supervision of this pool revealed a satisfactory degree of chlorination. Hand chlorination is employed.

(iii) **Shurnhold School**

This pool is still not yet fitted with suitable filtration plant. The system is still "empty-and-fill" with hand chlorination.

(iv) **Lowbourne School**

This pool has a simple plant of bag filters and automatic chlorination and seems very effective.

PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1928

Again, progress to the existing high standard previously achieved in past years. Mainly due to the efforts of the Council's Inspecting Officers — the Wiltshire County Fire Brigade.

Minor defects were generally rectified without bother, but in one or two cases the Committee delayed the issue of renewal licences as a warning.

One installation licence was withdrawn following failure of the tank being tested. One licence was modified and one new licence issued. There are now 22 licences involving 58,000 gallons, a slight increase on the previous year.

GAME ACT, 1831

Again the one licence only was issued to a shopkeeper to buy and sell game.

DISEASE OF ANIMALS (WASTE FOODS) ORDER, 1926

No visits or action taken in this connection.

RENT ACT, 1957

No tenants made application for Certificates of Disrepair.

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT, 1960

My previous year's forecast that firm action at the outset might solve the nuisance from ice cream vehicle chimes after 7 p.m. has proved correct. In only one instance was it necessary to issue a warning notice. However, the situation is always closely observed.

FACTORIES ACT, 1961

The new 1961 Act came into force during the year. It was satisfactory to note that Means of Escape Certificates were in future to be dealt with by the Fire Authorities.

Action taken is shown in the table on page 20.

OTHER ITEMS

For the year under review, I had the honour to be Chairman of the Wiltshire Branch of the Association of Public Health Inspectors.

I acted as Examiner to the local St. John's Ambulance Brigade in their examinations on Basic Hygiene.

FACTORIES

Inspections	Number on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by Local Authority (non-power)	1	—	—	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (power)	...	...	—	—
(3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	41	15	—	—
Total	...	—	—	—
		43	15	—

Defects	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	Number of cases in which prosecutions were initiated
Want of cleanliness (S.1.)	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2.)	...	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3)	...	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	...	—	—	—
Drainage of Floors (S.6)	...	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	...	—	—	—
(a) Insufficient	...	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	...	—	—	—
(c) Not for separate sexes	...	—	—	—
Total	...	—	—	—

Outworkers — Making wearing apparel (13-14) ...

3

VENTON, MELKSHAM